



MAGNA ONLINE SEMINARS

Avoid the Top Seven Mistakes in Hiring, Promotion and Tenure

Thursday, January 14, 2010

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM (Eastern)
12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (Central)
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM (Mountain)
10:00 AM – 11:15 AM (Pacific)

Presented by:

Debi Moon, J.D.
Rob Jenkins

Today's presenter:

Debi Moon

A graduate of the University of Tennessee and UT Law School, Debi Moon has served as the assistant vice president of Educational Affairs at Georgia Perimeter College, the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the director of the Center for Distance-Learning and as an associate professor of Business. She is the recipient of the National Teaching Excellence Award and was a Governor's Teaching Fellow in the State of Georgia. In the last five years, her centers won the Best Practices Award for Academic Affairs from the University System of Georgia, placed in the top 10 finalists nationally for the Community Colleges Futures Assembly Bellwether Award, and she was awarded the national Wagner Award for Innovation for her work in faculty development in distance learning.



Rob Jenkins

Best known for his popular "Two-Year Track" columns in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Rob Jenkins has earned a national reputation as an advocate for community colleges and as an authority on two-year college issues. During his 23-year career—all spent at two-year schools—he has served as a part-time faculty member, a full-time faculty member, a department chair, an academic dean, and a program director. He is currently associate professor of English and director of The Writers Institute at Georgia Perimeter College, a large, multi-campus, urban/suburban community college in Atlanta. Rob holds a master's degree in writing from the University of Tennessee, and his stories, essays, and poems have appeared in a number of outlets, including *The Clearing House*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *The Gwinnett Daily Post*. In recent years he has also come to be in some demand as a speaker, addressing faculty, staff, and student groups on a variety of two-year and four-year college campuses around the country as well as via the Internet.



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Avoid the Top Seven Mistakes in Hiring, Promotion and Tenure

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Avoid the Top Seven Mistakes in Hiring, Promotion and Tenure

- Rob Jenkins and Debi Moon

1

•Hiring, promotion and tenure decisions are high risk activities.

2

Hiring Mistakes

3

• **“Eighty percent of turnover is due to bad hiring decisions. It costs one third of a new hires’ annual salary to replace him.”**

• **Harvard Business Review**

4

Case Study: What Would You Do?

• One of the candidates in an interview is a young woman who is obviously pregnant. The job requires some evening and weekend teaching. Is it legal to ask if she can teach then?

5

Mistake #1 in Hiring

• Not providing adequate Equal Employment Opportunity training for all faculty and administrators involved in the hiring process



6

• **“Leaving managers with hiring authority ignorant of the basic features of discrimination law is an extraordinary mistake from which a jury can infer reckless indifference.”** US Court of Appeals

7

Perilous Interview Questions

- I love your accent, where are you from?
- Are you planning to have a family? When?
- What off-the-job activities do you participate in?
- Would you have a problem working with a mostly female department?

8

Perilous Interview Questions

- Where did you grow up?
- Even if health information is volunteered DO NOT ask about nature or extent of condition.
- Do you have children? How old are they?
- When did you graduate from high school?

9

More Mistakes in Interviews

- “This is long term position....”
- “This is a permanent position....”
- “If you do a good job, there’s no reason you won’t be here at Happy University the rest of your career....”

10

Case Study: What Would You Do?

As dean, you notice:

- Inadequate depth of applicant pool
- Candidates later demonstrate behavioral or social issues that lay hidden during the job interview process.

11

Mistake #2 in Hiring

- Not providing training or assistance in writing job descriptions and interview questions



12

Writing a Job Description Using Too Many Criteria

- Overly specific job requirements
- Examples include exact years of service
- Hire for organization fit... not job fit!

13

What to Do in Your College

- Train administrators how to write job descriptions
- Conduct a job analysis audit
- Establish types of behavioral and situational questions

14

Sample Behavioral Questions

- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- Give me a specific occasion when you followed a policy with which you did not agree.

15

• Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person who may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

• In what kind of work environment do you do your best work?

16

Sample Behavioral Questions

• What has been a particularly demanding goal for you to achieve?

• Can you think of a situation in which an innovative course of action was needed?

17

Case Study: What Would You Do ?

• Candidate has a link to his web page on his résumé. The web page has a link to his blog and Facebook page. It is obvious on his blog that he has radical political views. His Facebook page includes pictures of protests with neo-conservative groups.

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Mistake #3 in Hiring

- Ignoring social network sites when reviewing materials for new hires and/or not having a policy on what material to consider for candidates.



19

Newest Wrinkle in Hiring: Social Networks

- Internet postings open to students and stakeholders of the university
- Blogs with personal information
- Policy development in conjunction with college counsel

20

Negligent Hiring

- Protect yourself and college through a thorough investigation
- Investigation must be reasonable for the position
- Forseeability of harm to third parties issue

21

• According to the screening selection services division of ADP, 42% of its education credentials verification checks showed a difference between what the candidates said and what was found.

22

Can You Go “Off List”?

• Does your hiring policy state you can go “off list” when a hiring decision is at its final, public stage?

23

Policy Work Should Be Done NOW

- Establish policies about what to do with information you uncover
- Inform candidates up front
- Never ask about arrests, only felony convictions
- Tailor background checks to the job
- Consider credit checks for all financial jobs

24

Case Study: What Would You Do?

- While dean, your chairs hired 12 adjuncts who have received abysmal teaching evaluations. One has been accused of frequent bursts of profanity. Another sits and reads from the text as his “lectures.”

25

Mistake #4 in Hiring

Treating adjuncts as if they as less valuable than full time faculty with no regular professional development



26

Increase Part-Time Faculty Success

- Orientations
- Regular professional development
- Share hiring/evaluation/firing information
- Pre-assessment of adjuncts

27

Adjunct Solutions

- Open house tryouts
- Monthly email to candidates
- Annual professional development conference
- Monthly online development session
- Adjunct online sources

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Mistakes in Promotion and Tenure Issues

29

Case Study: What Would You Do ?

- Gertrude Goodeval has been department chair in science for seven years. You are her dean. Everyone in her department has glowing evaluations and receive the highest scores of any department in the college.

30

Mistake # 5: Promotion and Tenure

- Not writing candid evaluations with constructive criticism



31

“Friends don't give friends grades”

- Work is not your friendship pool
- Responsibility to candidly evaluate
- Give constructive criticism for improvement

32

Evaluation Keys

- Generalizations do not help
- “Susie is a good teacher”
- Constructive criticism is a must unless candidate meets *every* criteria for promotion
- Never say “If you do this, then it should be no problem for promotion....”

33

Sample Teaching Evaluation

- Susan has average teaching scores within the science department. She developed a new lab for majors. Her curriculum review work has increased course quality. She served as advisor for the science club and handles a college wide recycling project.

34

You Should Add

- Susan should attend professional development to improve her teaching including how to incorporate active learning strategies. She should consider creative approaches to student success and engagement.

35

Sample Service Evaluation

- Susan has an outstanding record in service. She chaired two college wide committees and was a member of the reaccreditation team. She is very involved in outreach including Habitat for Humanity, recycling and other service efforts.

36

You Should Add

- Susan has outstanding service work. I have discussed that while important, it stands behind teaching and research in our priorities. For promotion and tenure she needs to concentrate on improving her teaching skills and research efforts.

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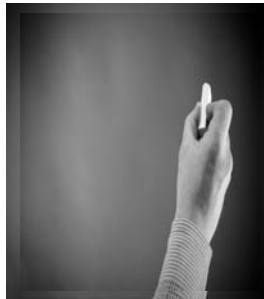
Case Study: What Would You Do?

- An English scholar has a propensity to discuss sexual activity drawn from several sexually explicit novels in his 21st century writing class. He asks female students to read the graphic passages from such books aloud in class.

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Mistake #6: Promotion and Tenure

Not understanding the parameters of academic freedom in the classroom and campus life.



Academic Freedom

- Faculty do not surrender constitutionally protected rights
- Free speech is not unlimited
- Most cases involve failure to follow procedures and professional misconduct

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Academic Freedom Does Not Extend to Profanity/Crude Language

- *Martin v. Parish* – fired economics professor for onslaught of profanity
- *Danborn v. Central Michigan* – fired coach who used racial slurs during practices

41

Academic Freedom and Curriculum Decisions

- The right to make curriculum decisions is not absolute.
- *Edwards v. University of Pennsylvania* “... we conclude that public university professors do not have a first amendment right to decide what will be taught in the classroom...”

42

Academic Freedom and Grades

- Professors don't have the "last say" in student grades
- "...no First Amendment rights under the school grading assignment procedures..."
Brown v. Armenti
- Terminated professor due to failure to change a grade *Parte v. Isbor*

43

Academic Freedom and Evaluations

- Academic freedom is no license for variance from job related procedures and requirements
- "Academic freedom does not insulate a professor from teaching review."
Hetrick v. Martin

44

Case Study: What Would You Do ?

- You are new Dean of Humanities. After you meet with HR and your provost you find that your division has had six lawsuits in the last year regarding hiring, promotion and tenure. Where do you begin?

45

Mistake #7 Promotion and Tenure

Not performing audits of potential pitfalls in system, not updating policies, and not having regular training for all administrators



46

Two Common Problems

- Sexual harassment court opinions have noted that regular training is vital
- Shifting standards in promotion and tenure cases leading to many problems

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Action Steps

- Have **continual, scheduled** training
- Lawyer should be proactive, not reactive
- Analyze potential issues – financial crunch, furloughs, disability issues for aging professoriate, discrimination in new areas such as transgender, etc.
- Change policies and schedule training

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Questions?

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Web Resources for Administrators

- Direct link to counsel
- Sample web resource from the University of Southern California portal www.usc.edu/academe/faculty/essential_guides/department_chair/index.html

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You can send your comments to us on the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/jan1410>

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Next Steps

1. Talk to your HR department about developing a thorough hiring guide for administrators which should include sample job descriptions for key college jobs including faculty.
2. Ask HR to develop a set of behavioral and situational questions for interviews. Most questions may be used for a wide range of positions.
3. To determine if the EEO training at your school is effective, have all faculty and administrators take a test after training. If your school is not doing regular training, consider having an online training module developed requiring a 100% score on a follow-up quiz before anyone may serve on a hiring committee.
4. Work with your administrative teams to develop hiring policies including the use of information from social networks as well as whether you can go "off list" on reference and other information when making hiring decisions.
5. Develop an extensive adjunct professional development resource center in coordination with your Center for Excellence in Teaching. This should include online information as well as regularly scheduled development opportunities.
6. Provide evaluation training annually for all administrators. Sample evaluations should be provided to give assistance in providing constructive criticism.
7. Provide training for all administrators and faculty regarding the limitations of academic freedom including speech, grading and curriculum decisions.
8. Provide regular sexual harassment training for all faculty, staff and administrators.
9. Conduct annual legal audits at administrators' retreats to evaluate policy and consider upcoming issues such as budget, furlough, disability and other legal icebergs approaching.

Questions for Self Assessment

1. Does your HR department provide all administrators with a thorough hiring guide including sample job descriptions for key college positions including faculty?
2. Does HR have a developed set of behavioral and situational questions for use in interviews?
3. Does the EEO training at your school require an evaluation to determine if faculty and administrators understand key EEO principles necessary for service on search committees?
4. Does your college have policies regarding the use of information from social networks as well as whether you can go "off list" on references when making hiring decisions?
5. Does your college have a thorough adjunct professional development program and resource center in coordination with your Center for Excellence in Teaching?
6. Is evaluation training provided annually for all administrators? Are sample evaluations provided to give assistance?
7. Is training provided for all administrators and faculty regarding the limitations of academic freedom including speech, grading and curriculum decisions?
8. Does your college provide regular sexual harassment training for all faculty, staff and administrators?
9. Does your administrative team conduct annual legal audits to evaluate hiring, promotion and tenure policy and consider upcoming issues such as budget, furlough, and other "legal icebergs"?

Resources for Part-time Faculty

Adjunct Nation (archive magazine, jobs, and more) <http://adjunctnation.com>

Chronicle of Higher Education (careers) <http://chronicle.com/jobs>

Part-time Faculty Guidebook <http://www.gpc.edu/~acadaff/publications/faculty-guidebook.pdf>

Orientation Training Modules http://www.gpc.edu/ctl/orientation_training_modules.htm

Adjunct Advantage (resources for part-time instructors)

http://www.duxbury.com/statistics_d/special_features/adjunct_website/organizations.html

Teaching University – http://www.gpc.edu/ctl/resources_teaching_university.htm

Online Resources (by discipline) http://www.gpc.edu/ctl/resources_online_resources.htm

Educational Technologies Staff, Facilities, and Training (technological answers and resources)
<http://www.gpc.edu/oit/>

Orientation Training Modules

Please turn up the volume on your computer/speakers to hear the video modules below

- How to Report No Show Students in the Student Information System (online)
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Reporting%20No%20Shows.wmv>

- How Do I Get a GPC Email Account?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/email.wmv>

- How Do I Access My Webmail (Your GPC Email on the Web)?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Webmail.wmv>

- How Do I Access My Class Roster?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Class%20Roster.wmv>

- How to Do I Get My J-card (GPC I.D.)?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/ID.wmv>

- When Do I Get Paid?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Payroll%20Calendar.wmv>

- What Textbook Do I Use To Teach My Class?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/textbooks.wmv>
- Part-Time Faculty Work Load: How Many Classes Can I Teach?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Part-time%20Workload.wmv>
- How to Record Your Final Grades
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/finalgrades.wmv>
- How Do I Get My Parking Permit?
- <http://gpc-wm1.gpc.edu/distancelearning/pmoolena/Parking%20Permit.wmv>

ACADEMIC Leader

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THE NEWSLETTER FOR ACADEMIC DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

A Few Thoughts for the New Chief Academic Officer

By Jeffrey H. Barker, PhD

New chief academic officers come to the job from a variety of backgrounds—faculty, deanships, or other administrative jobs. They come with widely varying expectations and assumptions about the CAO role, including ideas that bear little relation to the reality they encounter.

After a number of years as CAO of a small southeastern college, I was asked to participate in the Council of Independent Colleges' workshop for new CAOs. The organizers asked if I would lead group discussions on the theme of "Surviving and Thriving as a New CAO." I agreed, though I warned the organizers that while I could speak as one who had survived (so far), *thriving* is always an aspiration. In some ways, claiming to be a thriving CAO is a bit like someone who takes the stage and announces that she's a comedian, only to be told by an audience member, "We'll be the judge of that."

Here are some of the thoughts I shared with the new CAOs. Far from an instructional manual—as if there could be such a thing—these are simply reports from the front.

1. If you don't have a thick skin, grow one.

You will be criticized, justifiably or not. You will be blamed for things you do and for things done by others. You will work with unreasonable people, some of whom will remind you of yourself at an earlier stage in your career. You

will realize that while your job is never boring, sometimes boring would be nice.

If you didn't come to the job with a reasonably thick skin, grow one—quickly. You *will* make some people unhappy, and if you take everything—all the criticism and the comments (said or whispered)—personally, you'll be both bitter and ineffective. Harry Truman's maxim about life in Washington, "If you want a friend, get a dog," is a bit too strong in this case...but perhaps "If you need constant approval, you won't be able to do what needs to be done" will help you survive.

In my current position, I followed an extraordinarily popular and effective dean. Faculty and students had proclaimed her "dean forever." After an early faculty meeting where I introduced an initiative to look at the faculty evaluation system, one long-time faculty member came up to me, smiled, and said, "I just can't wait to get back to a *real* dean." Years later, I enjoy a good relationship with that faculty member—and we have a new, faculty-developed evaluation system.

2. Accept your helmet, Lord Vader.

Well, not really. Some may *think* that's what you've become, and we've all heard the line about "crossing over to the dark side," but that's too strong a statement. There is an important point here, and it's related to point number 1: If you come to the CAO position from the faculty, realize that you are no longer one of the faculty, or not *just* one of the faculty.

While CAOs may and hopefully will make friends with faculty members, it is always on a different basis than when you were "one of them." Much like the president, what you say (and don't say), what you do (and don't do), and what you wear (and don't wear) will be observed, analyzed, dissected, deconstructed, and reconstructed in forms you will not recognize. This happens with faculty-to-faculty friendships as well, but the terms and stakes are very different.

In my first year as CAO, some senior faculty believed they were not getting adequate attention from me. I had reached out to some but, having come from a faculty position, I probably did gravitate more toward faculty my own age, at least at first. My very wise president at that time gave me good, constructive counsel, and I took corrective steps. This sort of relationship building is always a work in progress, but things seem to have improved. (I know, I know—I can hear the voices: "We'll be the judge of that!")

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ACADEMIC Leader

The Newsletter for Academic Deans
and Department Chairs

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Personnel Issues

Avoiding Tenure and Promotion Controversies

By Rob Kelly

Controversies surrounding promotion and tenure can lead to legal trouble for departments and institutions. It's up to academic leaders to guard against possible pitfalls by adopting, disseminating, and implementing equitable policies.

In an interview with *Academic Leader*, Debi Moon, assistant vice president of educational affairs at Georgia Perimeter College, and Rob Jenkins, associate professor of English and director of The Writers Institute at Georgia

“You represent the university when you’re an administrator. As much as you want to be a friend to your colleagues, there has to be a line.”

Perimeter College, discussed some common mistakes administrators make regarding promotion and tenure and ways to avoid them.

“I think the most common mistake administrators make is not giving clear standards to faculty of what’s expected and not backing that up with evaluations that give faculty guidance on how they can achieve promotion and tenure,” Moon says.

Mixed messages

One issue among academic leaders is that often they come up through the faculty ranks and have developed close relationships with colleagues and often view themselves as advocates for these colleagues rather than administrators. “You have to draw the line. You represent the university when you’re an administrator. As much as you want to be a friend to your colleagues, there has

to be a line,” Moon says.

As an academic leader, it’s important that you watch what you communicate to faculty members when it comes to promotion and tenure. When communicating with colleagues, one’s instinct may be to be reassuring, but this can backfire. Casual reassuring comments to faculty members such as, “You’re on the right track” or “Tenure is not going to be a problem for you” can lead to lawsuits when the faculty members’ expectations of earning promotion or tenure are not realized, Moon says.

Instead of these types of comments, academic leaders should “give a clear path for their faculty to go down in order to get promoted or get tenure,” Moon says.

‘Grade inflation’

Another issue is being overly generous in formal faculty evaluations. As with student grading, there seems to be a trend toward inflated evaluations, Jenkins says. This type of grade inflation can lead to faculty members who perform marginally appearing to have met requirements in formal evaluations. “It’s hard to deny tenure or promotion when you’ve been telling the faculty member that he or she has been meeting expectations all this time.”

Ambiguous policies

When dealing with individual faculty members, specific situations, if not clearly articulated in tenure and promotion policies, can open the door to legal problems. For example, what do you do when a faculty member submits his tenure portfolio, which notes that he is waiting to hear back from a publisher about whether his manuscript has been accepted? Can his tenure committee delay action until the publisher decides on his manuscript?

What about when a person who is

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How to Talk Yourself out of a Job

By Jeffrey L. Buller, PhD

We tend to think of interviews as processes that select suitable candidates for different jobs. But in many ways the purpose of interviews is more accurately to reject unsuitable candidates. After all, by the time a search reaches the stage of meeting a few finalists on campus, the institution has largely been satisfied that everyone being interviewed is qualified for the job. The candidate's résumé has been examined, references have been contacted, and the candidate has already answered a number of questions appropriately during a phone interview or an off-sight at a conference. The critical question now is, **Which of these finalists is the best fit for the program and the institution?** Seen in this way, interviews are often less about demonstrating the qualities you possess in order to convince the committee that you deserve the position than they are about not demonstrating the qualities that might rule you out from further consideration. It is not uncommon for search committees to discover that a candidate who has all the right qualifications "on paper" acts so inappropriately that one begins to wonder, "Is this person actively trying *not* to be offered the job?" In fact, this experience occurs often enough that, as a public service, we would like to provide tips on how to talk your way out of a job during an interview. Follow these simple guidelines, and you'll significantly increase the likelihood that the position will be offered to someone else.

1. Treat the interview like a vacation.

One of the great benefits of doing an on-sight interview is that you get to visit another institution and perhaps even experience a part of the world

that you've never seen before. But, for serious candidates, that remains an added benefit: The real purpose for their travel is to make themselves available to the institution in order for people there to get to know them a little better and discover whether they're a good fit for the school's current needs. But if your goal is to eliminate yourself from serious consideration even before you set foot on campus, simply approach the interview as though it were a free vacation. Treat the administrative assistant who's arranging the trip as though he or she were a personal travel agent, insist upon extending your visit a few extra days for sightseeing or personal purposes, inquire about bringing along members of the family (when the institution hasn't specifically invited them), and try to conduct personal business between interview sessions. These simple actions will convey the impression that you're the sort of person who's willing to inconvenience others for your own purposes and thus not the type of colleague anyone would want. Many people at the school will decide that they don't want to hire you before they've even met you.

2. Act like you'd be doing the institution a favor by working there.

Interviews force candidates to strike a precarious balance: They have to talk extensively about their own accomplishments without appearing arrogant or overly impressed with themselves. Search committees usually understand how artificial the conversation during interviews has to be and realize that the candidate is not going to spend so much time talking about himself or herself after the hire has been made. But if you really don't want to be offered the position, it's easy to get around this inconvenience. Simply convey the impression that you're overqualified for the position or too

good for the institution and you're well on your way to talking yourself out of a job. After all, "You'd be fortunate to have this person on your staff" is something for a candidate's *references* to say, not for you to say yourself. Successful candidates tend to mix discussion of their own attributes with positive statements about the position, program, or institution. Your goal should be to turn the conversation back to yourself any time it begins to drift to any of the needs or goals that other people may have. Remember that search committees want to hire people who seem excited about the prospect of working there, not those who will condescend to accept an offer of employment that is beneath them. So, do whatever you can to place yourself in the latter category.

3. Focus on what you'll get out of the position rather than what you'll contribute. Administrators and search chairs see an immediate red flag whenever candidates seem to care only about the salary, benefits, and other personal advantages of a job. Certainly, no one expects you to take a position without adequate compensation, and there will be an appropriate time during the interview process for serious candidates to inquire about the salary range and benefit package. But if you'd like to get out of the running fast, give the people you're talking to the impression that all you're really interested is what you'll get out of the job, rather than what you'll put into it. For instance, several of your meetings are likely to conclude with someone asking you, "Do you have any questions for us?" Rather than having a few substantive questions in mind and perhaps asking about the salary range after you've discussed five or six other issues, lead with

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3. If you listen to both sides of an issue, you're missing all the others.

No doubt, most if not all CAOs are met with requests as soon as they accept the position—or even beforehand, during the interview—that they act on one or another matter. It's natural for people to think that the first one in the door (or in the email inbox) will prevail, especially if the decision in question is one that your predecessor left unfinished.

Wait until you are settled in, and then don't act on the first or last thing you hear. The old chestnut from your interview about "wanting to learn more about the culture of your new institution before making significant changes" is, like many clichés of administrative life, a cliché because it reflects sound practice. Part of learning about your new institution is learning the *complexity* of its relationships, structural features, challenges, opportunities—and minefields. Take the time to listen and learn. Listen for what is said and especially for what is not said, before you act.

Immediately after I accepted my current position, while I was hundreds of miles and months away from my new posting, I received an email from a faculty member offering to take over another department and consolidate that department with his own, thereby saving me from having to deal with a troublesome situation. I thanked him for his offer...but declined for the time being. After taking the time to come to know the parties involved, I decided to rebuild the troubled department rather than eliminate it. The result is that what was one of the more dysfunctional departments on campus has become one of our star performers.

4. Was that my honeymoon?

A corollary to point number 3: While it is good to listen and learn before you act, you do need to act. Most colleges and universities aren't looking for a new CAO just to continue whatever was done by the previous CAO. Your window of opportunity—your "honeymoon"—will vary according to the circumstances of your institution and those of your hire, but it will be shorter than you imagine. If you are brought in during or following serious governance conflicts, or if you are facing the worst effects of our economic meltdown, your honeymoon may be shorter than a New York minute.

Once you have a sense of your new place, work with the president and faculty leadership to establish strategic priorities for you and for the academic area (incorporating whatever priorities you inherited), with time frames ranging from the very near term to whatever outside time frame is appropriate to your president's and your institution's strategic plans. Work with the president to plan for some early "wins" that will help you build good will with the faculty. You'll need it down the road.

In arriving at my current position, I discovered that the institution had been trying to solve academic calendar issues for a decade, with numerous committees formed and reports filed, and that not solving the issues had stymied curricular review. I worked with the faculty to establish a strategic review process, gaining some credibility by naming the task force the "Final Calendar Review Committee," (long-time faculty members got the joke), and by the end of the first year we had begun to implement a new calendar. It wasn't easy and the result was far from perfect, but it did get the change process started.

5. If you don't have a billion-dollar budget, you can't build around every problem.

There is a temptation to work with those who will work with *you*—you seem to get a better return on your time and trouble by doing more with those folks and less with those who refuse to cooperate.

The gains are short term, though. Unless you have nearly unlimited resources—unless you are an Ivy or Giant Public U. in the late 1960s—you can't just build around a problem and hope the problem goes away. In the post-economic meltdown era, building around a problem is nothing but a faint memory for most of us.

It may take more time and planning, especially in those difficult personnel cases with legal and governance implications, but you need to reach out to those who appear unwilling or unable to work with you. Trouble delayed or denied almost never is trouble diminished.

After coming to know the faculty and deans at my college, I worked with them to establish the principle that *the most important tenure decision is made at the hire*. Search committees redoubled their scrutiny of candidates, looking for the best possible person. In addition, I worked with the deans to establish a goal of no negative tenure decisions. This wasn't because we were abandoning standards and tenuring everyone; we focused on tightening the pretenure review practices and engaging in energetic counseling for probationary faculty experiencing difficulty. For those unable or unwilling to take corrective action, we worked to help them see the probable trajectory of a bid for tenure. Again, the results are not perfect, but they have helped to

NEW CAO...

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avoid creating problems that everyone comes to regret.

6. Feed the heart.

The academic program is the heart of the institution. You cannot survive—let alone thrive—without feeding that heart. This means resources, of course, but it means much more than that. There is never enough money in higher education; no matter how much you have, needs expand to meet and then exceed your resources. There is never enough time; there's always more to do, and if you ever begin to think otherwise, think again and then give your regional accreditor a call to explain that you don't have any more improvements to make.

Beyond resources, though, feeding the heart is a matter of openly, repeatedly championing the ideals and the everyday life of the academic enterprise. Believing in the value of what we do and in the good work of our faculty and students is essential to success. One need not be blind to weaknesses and failures—in fact, one cannot afford to be ignorant of these—but being the CAO needs to include being the CAA (the chief academic advocate). I believe that one cannot lead an academic program except from the front, and that means being an open, earnest advocate—even a cheerleader—for the many different ways that the mysterious faculty-student chemistry produces that perpetual beginner, the liberally educated person.

There are so many ways to do this, including promoting the importance of endowed faculty development funds in fund-raising efforts, creating avenues outside the institution to publicize the professional accomplishments of faculty and students, championing funding for

undergraduate research, and so on. I began with a simple step: With the enthusiastic cooperation of the trustees, I created an “Academic Spotlight” feature at the beginning of each trustee academic affairs meeting, where one faculty member or one program or a student-faculty research team has 10

I believe that one cannot lead an academic program except from the front, and that means being an open, earnest advocate—even a cheerleader—for the many different ways that the mysterious faculty-student chemistry produces that perpetual beginner, the liberally educated person.

minutes to tell the story of a recent success. The result has been a real education for the trustees and encouragement for faculty and students.

7. Time away, time off—it's not a luxury.

I can't count the number of times I've had faculty members (and other administrators) say to me, “I wouldn't have your job for any amount of money.” Fortunately and so far, for the most part that has been the tagline to an expression of appreciation (or at least sympathy) for having made a difficult decision—or it is said after seeing the light on in my office at all hours. There's truth in the statement, however: It *is* (or at least can be) a difficult job, with pressure on all sides. Unless you have one of our former vice president's

“man-sized safes” somewhere in your office, you are going to need to get away.

It's tempting and ego stroking to think that you just can't take time off, that the college can't survive without you. Don't believe it. Consider the 1976 doctors' strike in Los Angeles. Urban legends tell us that the mortality rate went down 18 percent. The truth is more complex: There were many fewer surgeries and so fewer deaths, as was to be expected. The best judgment is that the strike had no real impact on the overall death rate, however.

The same is likely to be true if you take some time off. The college isn't likely to fall apart. If it does, you have bigger problems than you thought. What *is* likely to fall apart if you don't take some time off is...you. If you have any sort of life or family outside of the office, you need to tend to that life and family. You can't do your best for the college if the rest of your life is in bad repair.

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Online Seminar Call for Proposals

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Redesigning Learning Spaces

In the past, faculty had little input on classroom design. But their suggestions have become essential as they modify their teaching techniques in light of a growing body of knowledge of how students learn, says Peter Saunders, director of Oregon State University's Center for Teaching and Learning.

In an interview with *Academic Leader*, Saunders discussed how to determine redesign priorities, the effects redesign can have, and how to coordinate redesigned learning spaces with the curriculum.

AL: *How do you know when a redesign is needed?*

Saunders: If faculty are beginning to try [new teaching techniques] and it's not working, or if they request rooms somewhere else on campus, it may be time to consider a redesign. Look at the faces of students sitting in class. Do they look bored or engaged? How many students typically skip class? How are your retention rates? Can the faculty actually achieve the outcomes that the accrediting associations are telling them to achieve?

AL: *How might a redesign make a classroom more conducive to collaborative learning?*

Saunders: Collaborative learning means that students need to face each other. They need to talk to each other. They need to be able to share documents. If there are enough spaces on the edges of the room and if the room is big enough, you can push the chairs around and put them into circles and create a collaborative atmosphere. But if you look at a lot of classrooms, there is no edge space. Even in a tiered classroom, if there is edge space, if you extend the tiers and if you put seats that can turn to each other, you can create a space where students can actu-

ally collaborate.

Collaboration doesn't always take place inside the classroom. If you go to the coffee shops, lounges, libraries, and even hallways you'll see they have begun putting spaces and boards where students can work together collaboratively. We're seeing collaboration spread beyond the classroom. I think the whole university is becoming a learning landscape.

AL: *How might institutions prioritize their redesign plans?*

Saunders: Let's start with how much is lost in the classroom when you start to put in seats that spin and turn and so forth. In a tiered classroom you can lose anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of the seats that were there before. But on the other side of this the number of students who drop out is much more serious than the 10, 15, or 20 percent of the seats lost [in a redesigned classroom]. You could lose 15 percent of your students in that particular room, but the students show up in another classroom. But if those students drop out completely, we lose them in every class those students would have been in.

Most likely this means smaller classrooms, but you can start using the hallways and other spaces where the students can go. . . . You can simply have chairs that roll. You can start small by putting in whiteboards and interactive whiteboards.

AL: *How might a redesign accommodate the pedagogical needs of the different instructors, students, and courses?*

Saunders: We took a flat space and renovated it completely into a space that allows for multiple teaching and learning styles. The key was that it wasn't tiered, so we were able to do stuff. We used all the walls. We

installed whiteboards that slide back and forth that give you multiple layers. We put in chairs and tables that roll. The sides of the tables can fold down on both sides, which allows us to have everybody in rows for lectures.

We have interactive whiteboards at both ends of the room that talk to each other. The idea was to get away from sight lines—the idea that you need staggered seating. When you no longer need to be looking to the front you don't need sight lines. Sight lines are taken care of when you put chairs on rollers and the professor's image can be projected on all the boards around the room.

AL: *How might you coordinate instruction and classroom redesign?*

Saunders: It's not unusual to build a beautiful classroom and then have a faculty member say, "I won't teach in that classroom because I can't find the front of the room," or "I'm uncomfortable with all these changes." If you're going to renovate the room to do these kinds of things, you need to have a training budget as part of the budget for that room. Training is essential to show faculty how they can start small using the room's features. The key to classroom redesign is curriculum and course redesign. They go together. It's not just learning a new trick or two, but actually thinking about how you can redesign your course so that it runs hand in hand with the kind of space you're in.

On January 27, Peter Saunders will lead a Magna Online Seminar titled "Redesigning Learning Spaces to Improve Teaching and Learning." For information, see www.magnapubs.com/calendar/385.html. ▼

OUT OF A JOB...

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this question immediately. The person you're talking to is likely to conclude that, if he or she makes the mistake of hiring you, your first priority will always be advancing your own interests, not those of the institution as a whole. In fact, you're likely to be the sort of person who will be in your supervisor's office constantly, complaining about your compensation package and wanting a raise. Most colleges and universities have plenty of employees like that already, and they'll probably conclude that it's a good idea to diversify the staff so that it includes a greater number of collegial, team-spirited employees.

4. Ask for or even demand special treatment. No search committee will refuse to make special accommodations for a candidate who requires reasonable assistance because of a disability. But they'll probably resent making a lot of changes to the itinerary because of a

candidate's individual requests. It can be a logistical nightmare to set up even the most basic interview schedule because of the complexity of everyone's schedule. So, when a candidate starts requesting changes to that schedule, the problems arise very quickly. By asking for special treatment, you'll make it clear that, if you're already "high maintenance" even before you've been offered the job, you'll make their lives miserable once you're hired. Serious candidates know that, if a search committee asks whether there's anyone else they'd like to meet during the interview process, they'll make suggestions only when such a conversation is extremely important, and they'll be understanding when, even then, it may simply not be possible to meet that request. You, on the other hand, should ask to meet with several senior administrators and possibly even the chair of the governing board just as a "courtesy call." These people are all extremely busy, and few things will destroy your candidacy faster than wasting their time.

For the occasional person who might actually want to be offered a job, our advice is simple: Just don't do any of these things. If, on the other hand, your primary goal is to ensure that someone is hired, the four simple steps outlined above have proven themselves in innumerable searches. Milk the interview process for all it's worth, treat your prospective colleagues with barely disguised contempt, and place your needs above those of the institution and you're all but certain to talk yourself right out of the job.

Jeffrey L. Buller is dean of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of The Essential Department Chair: A Practical Guide to College Administration (2006), The Essential Academic Dean: A Practical Guide to College Leadership (2007), and The Essential College Professor: A Practical Guide to an Academic Career (2009). All are published by Jossey-Bass. ▼

TENURE...

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not on the tenure committee comes forward with information that she believes should be considered in the committee's decision?

Lacking clear guidelines on such situations, administrators sometimes decide

these issues on a case-by-case basis, which also can be risky. These and other situations should be addressed in the tenure policies, and any policy changes must be communicated to the faculty.

Actually, the institution should do more than inform faculty about policy changes. It also should provide training

to ensure that faculty are clear about tenure and promotion policies.

On January 14, Debi Moon and Rob Jenkins will lead a Magna Online Seminar titled "Avoid the Top Seven Mistakes in Hiring, Promotion and Tenure." For information, see www.magnapubs.com/calendar/386.html. ▼

FIRE...

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this view, and at a time when state budgets are tightening and funding for education is shrinking, public support

is more essential than ever. FIRE's rhetoric may be good for its own fund-raising efforts but not for the future of academia. My fear is that in its attempts to improve higher education, FIRE may be doing as much harm as good.

Darren L. Linwill is the basic course director in the Department of Communication Studies at Clemson University. ▼

The Danger of FIRE

By Darren L. Linvill, PhD

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. FIRE was founded in 1999 by Alan Charles Kors and Harvey A. Silverglate following their publication of *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses* (The Free Press, 1998), a criticism of perceived “thought reform” taking place in higher education. FIRE’s mission is to defend individual rights within America’s colleges and universities, including “freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of individual liberty and dignity.” In the past 10 years, FIRE has worked diligently to support individual rights in higher education and has had its share of victories. Its voice can frequently be heard speaking out in the media, from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to *The Washington Post*. FIRE, however, is doing good work for the wrong reasons.

FIRE’s efforts have centered on exposing and criticizing university employees who have violated students’ or professors’ rights to free expression and due process. For example, a recent high-profile case that gained FIRE’s attention was Virginia Tech’s inclusion of “commitment to diversity” in tenure and promotion guidelines, a requirement FIRE condemned as a “loyalty oath.” FIRE has been similarly outspoken in the case of a Los Angeles Community College student who was allegedly verbally attacked by his instructor for his religious views. The foundation has also recently come to the defense of University of Maryland students’ constitutional right to view a pornographic film on campus. FIRE clearly acts as a valuable watchdog on a wide range of issues. The foundation

has undertaken cases without direct regard to ideology, defending everyone from self-professed socialist faculty to student members of college Republican groups.

The danger of FIRE for higher education lies not in what FIRE does but in what it says. FIRE’s rhetoric often frames academia as an inherently biased and broken system and the foundation itself as a noble change agent. FIRE’s website states unequivocally: “The university setting is where students are most subject to the assignment of group identity, to indoctrination of radical political orthodoxies, to legal inequality, to intrusion into private conscience, and to assaults upon the moral reality of individual rights and responsibilities.” Without empirical evidence, such sweeping claims are repeated throughout FIRE publications. The introduction to FIRE’s *Guide to Free Speech on Campus*, one of several such guides the foundation distributes, states, “America’s colleges and universities are all too often dedicated more to indoctrination and censorship than to freedom and individual self-government.” Furthermore, in FIRE’s Winter 2009 newsletter, FIRE’s president, Greg Lukianoff, calls the violation of basic rights in higher education “systemic” and asserts, “FIRE’s greatest hope is that the academy will embrace both its role as a marketplace of ideas and its duty to provide rights to its students and faculty,” the obvious implication being that the academy has not yet done so.

My own experience as a student, instructor, and administrator tells me that such rhetoric is at least questionable and at worst inflammatory. Research agrees with me, suggesting that at least some of the issues raised in FIRE’s rhetoric are not as pervasive as the foundation would have the public believe. Smith, Mayer, and Fritschler,

authors of *Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008), made a comprehensive analysis of existing research addressing ideology’s role on college campuses and undertook their own national survey of faculty and focus groups with undergraduates. Their research found that students do not generally feel discriminated against for their beliefs and faculty are not ideologically menaced by their administration in the tenure and promotion process. Far from finding evidence that universities are indoctrinating students in “radical political orthodoxies,” the authors instead found a serious lack of any politics in university classrooms and curriculum and specifically call to engage students in more political and civics education.

There are well over 4,000 degree-granting institutions of higher education in the United States. It is unfortunately inevitable that there will be cases where misguided or overzealous employees will violate the rights of students and employees. Given the sheer numbers of people employed in the higher educational system, violations will in all probability continue to happen with regularity. FIRE has played an important role in identifying and correcting these violations, and for this they should be commended. To say, or even imply, however, that academia as a whole is guilty of indoctrination and that it is ignoring its duty to provide basic rights to students and faculty does unjust damage to the public’s perception of higher education. A 2006 survey conducted by Gross and Simmons found that nearly 40 percent of the public considered bias in the college classroom to be a very serious problem. FIRE’s rhetoric reinforces

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